

February 6, 2008

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As our great state steps up to meet the challenge of better flood protection for Californians, please accept my thanks for your administration's past commitment to and support for emergency flood repairs and new infrastructure investments that benefit public safety, the protection of property and the economic well-being of our state.

Two years ago, I requested your assistance to expedite repairs on critical erosion sites that threatened our Central Valley levee system. In an unprecedented fashion, your administration helped execute the State-Federal Action Plan for Expedited Levee Repair, which illustrated that, with determination and creativity, we can cut through the bureaucratic red tape to keep our citizens safer. More than 100 levee sites have now been repaired under this program.

Now, I must request your assistance again. The federal budget you proposed earlier this week includes \$103.8 million in funding for California state-federal flood control projects. This is a 35 percent decrease in funding from this year's federal budget. In recognition of our critical flood control needs, California needs more federal funding, not less.

In November 2006, California voters approved nearly \$5 billion in state bond funds to continue the vital investments for flood control projects statewide. This is an important start, but more must be done to raise the level of flood protection in many communities throughout our state.

When Hurricane Katrina opened the nation's eyes to the devastating consequences of inadequate flood protection, California acted responsibly to improve its flood control systems. Because the need was urgent and federal funding was not immediately available, California elected to move ahead of the federal government and fund repairs with the expectation that the federal cost share would be reimbursed at a later date. The decision to wait for federal funding for these repairs would have put our flood control systems at risk of failure during the next major storm event. In some instances, California undertook repair obligations that traditionally have a 75 percent federal cost share. In other instances, the state began rehabilitation efforts that are traditionally 100 percent the responsibility of the federal government under the PL 84-99, Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies, program.

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California is making improvements to its flood control systems but the federal government must be a full partner in this effort. This can be done by:

- Providing federal funding to the full capability of the Sacramento District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps);
- Streamlining the Corps' approval process for urgent levee repairs and improvements to be constructed by nonfederal sponsors under Section 408; and
- Reforming federal crediting rules to allow California to invest state funds far beyond the Corps' capability now and receive recognition in later years as having provided the nonfederal cost share for federal projects undertaken by the Corps.

California is fully prepared to meet its cost share obligations on federal flood control projects, and I urge you to fund the Corps with the additional resources necessary to keep these projects moving. With this funding, and a strong commitment to continue working together to cut red tape and expedite the federal approval processes, we can better protect our people, our communities and our economy.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger

cc: The Honorable Harry Reid  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable John Boehner  
The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan  
The Honorable Pete Domenici  
The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky  
The Honorable David Hobson  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Barbara Boxer